

[Charles L. Weibush]

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Life History

FOLKLORE:

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REFERENCE.

Interview with Charles L Weibush, Riesel Texas. (White [?] Pioneer). “ I was born in Brenham Texas in 1873. My father George [?]. Weibush came over from Germany in 1855 at the age of 17 years. He came by boat to New Orleans and it took eight weeks to make the trip.

“Not all the German immigrants who came to Texas during the thirties remained in Houston and Galveston, their first stop. Some went into the interior and laid the basis for a number of German settlements in Austin, Fayette, and Colorado counties. From these settlements in turn other settlements were founded in the forties and fifties in the counties just named as well as in Victoria, De Witt, and Washington Washington counties.

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"My father was one of the immigrants who settled in Washington County in the fifties, to be exact, it was the spring of 1855. He lived at this place a few years and learned to speak the American language. After this he secured a job as stage driver. For several years he drove the stage from Washington to [?] Waco. This took him over the road in Falls county known as the Waco, Marlin road.

"When the Civil War came he was one of the first to enlist. He served under Captain Willis Lang, Company B, Fifth Texas Cavalry, Army of the Confederate States of America, organized at Marlin, Texas, and in this company were many from Falls and over the line of McLennan Counties. He served under Captain [?] Lang until Lang's death, and all the four years of the war. C.12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 "When the Civil War was over my father came home and moved to [?] and went into the livery business.

In 1857 my mother came to Washington County, with her widowed mother and an older brother. This brother was in the Confederate army and served until he was killed after a year's service. Thus [?] our family was well represented in the conflict of their adopted country.

"In the first immigration to this country there were two cousins who landed in New York and became leading citizens of that city. A year or two before my father came over he had two brothers to come over, one settled in Waco, Texas, his name was Louis Weibush, and his descendants are living there now.

"In the fall of 1879 my father and mother moved to Falls County, (they had previously moved from Brenham to Waco). They settled just over the line between Falls and [?] McLennan County, near what was then known as the Sandy Creek Community, this was one and a half miles of the present town of Riesel. They were known in both this community and Waco as "Uncle George and Aunt Dora. "

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"When we moved here / in 1879, all the land east of the H & T.C. railroad was range land, Bill and Green Barnes had large cattle herds and Titsworth and Corning had large sheep ranches. On what was then known as the black prairie near by there were only two German families who came in 1878. This was east of the present town of Perry. 3 "A small number of erman German families were living in the timber land west of the town of Perry on what was known as the post oak country. hey They all settled on what was known as [??] Big Sandy Creek, in the Brazos bottom. In those early days it did not rain on the prairie lik like it did in the bottom. The names of the settlers that were here when we came are as follows. (That is, their last names).

"Mr Gross, Hamburg, Bohn, Reuss, Schwaerzer, Schlick, Zirkel, ehrling Wehring , olster Polster , Rice, Fedra, Leuschner, Koch, Boehm. Some of these famlies families had come here as early as 1860. [?] Henry Mier, ieman Tieman , and Henry Miller and my uncle [??] Fred Waibush came here about the year 1880. Some of these families only lived here a few years , and there was a bad drouth and they moved back to Brenham Texas. But later some of them came back, among those were Hamburg and [?] Wehring . They [returned?] in 1890 .

"In the fall of 1873 Fritz von Schlimbach moved here from Germany and bought his first tract of land and started what is known as the Schlimbach boom. He was a Methodist minister and preached in Waco from about 1884 or 5 too 1876 or 77. Then he and his family returned to Germany for a while.

"Soon after buying his first tract of land Schlimbach built his home, it was a two story house built in the shape of a U and had 26 large rooms / with a hall which would seat as many as two hundred people. This was used for a community hall where the sunday school Sunday School and church services were held. This was where the public meeting were held as well as the dances for the young people of the settlment. 4 "When Mr Schlimbach came from [?] Germany on his first trip, he brought about 25 people with him, they were mostly young men. After those young men had made enough money to send for

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them, they sent for their sweethearts and married them and this increased the number of families of his settlement. He started the land boom and it was raised from \$2.50 an acre to \$ 8.00 or \$10.00.

“In connection with the building of his house I might mention the fact that while it was being built he and his family stayed at the home of my parents. They had to stretch a few tents to make room for us all, and at the far end of our farm there was a rambling old house where the young men who came with Mr Schlimbach from Germany , stayed while his house was being built. They slept and did their own cooking at this house.

“Soon after Mr Schlimbach finished building his house he started buying land and improving it together with all kinds of farming implements. Within the next few years [?] made a number of trips to [?] Germany and on his return he always brought more people with him. But there were a few of the young men who became homesick and returned to Germany.

“During Mr Schlimbach's stay in Germany he interested a number of the wealthy class in Texas among them was Bethman von Holweg, von Jarra von Gaeburg, von Graeling, and others. Some from up North also became intersted interested a Mr Bernhard and [?] A .H. Weibush of St Louis a cousin of my father. Also a brother of Von Holweg came over in the summer of 1884. The followin following are some of the names of those who came and joined this colony soon after, that is within the next few years. 5 “They were Fleischaur, Kuehl, Mitscher, Ballman, Dyck, Beck, Ludwig, Denke, And ax Max von Holweg whom I have already mentioned, a brother pf Bethman von Holweg came in the summer of 1884 and bought his first tract of land in the fall. This tract was about four miles sout-east of the present town of Perry. Holweg was a bachelor and he brought with him H. Ludwig who was his body-guard over in Germany.

“Holweg at once built a nice house and improved his farm and hired a man to cook and keep house. This same fall he bought 200 acres more and improved it and in the coming

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spring he had the Dck Dyck family to come over from ermany Germany and as the oldest girl of this family was engage engaged to Ludwig they married and moved into the house, and later Holweg made them a present of the 200 acres he bought in the spring.

"From 1885 to 1893 von Holweg bought 14 more places, most of them were east of the town of tto Otto and eight miles south of Mart. He cut this land into small farms and sold it to the Germans on long terms. I wish to mention here that, like [?] Schlimbach , von Holweg sent spent weeks in the home of my parents while his house was being built. He was a highly educated man but plain in his ways. When he visited in our home after he had moved to the one he built my mothr mother always cooked potato soup for him.

"There is a story of dissapointed affection in this Holwegs leaving Germany. In those days they did not defy the custom as now. He was born in the higher class and his sweetheart was a commoner, and so it was out of the question then for them to get married, so he came to 6 Texas to forget his dissapointment and to find a new interest in life. This he did in helping the German colonist to found their new homes and to aid them while doing this. He never married and his nephew , who was the son of the Chancellor of Germany during the World ar War, came over to look after the property on the death of Max von Holweg, the subject of this narrative the . The nephew made Mr Hermann imers Seimers the manager and at Mr Seimers death Mr tto au came Otto Rau became the manager, since Mr Rau's death his son-in-law , Louis Holse has charge of the property that has not been sold.

"I must tell you about one more man that von Holweg helped, and that was William Hommell who came to Falls county in 1882, a single man, but soon married. On the reccommendation of my father von Holweg employed him and soon made him manager of one of the farms at or near tto Otto . Hommell made good with Holweg and so when Holweg made one of his tris trips to Germany he gave the farm that Hommell was manager of to im him , thus showing the generosity of the man.

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"During the large immigration from 1880 to 1885 of Germans to this community, many people came here from alls Falls and McLennan County who belonged to the Lutheran church. n In 1882 a small congregation was organize organized under the direction of Rev. J.J. [?] who served until 1884. In 1883 the Lutherans built their first church. In 1888 the church eing being too small the congregation built a larger one under the leadership of Rev. Wunderlich , who served this congregation from 1884 until 1890. So out of the small beginning of 1873 we have what is called the 7 German community located in the northern part of Falls and the south-east part of McLennan County. In addition to the names of those already givn given , the following came here at a later day. Bluhm, Ebner, uling Pauling , Hamg, Holze, pe Pope , Bletsch, arman Hartman , eigand Weigand , Ernst, Hander Grusendorf, H. Pothoff and R. Bernhausen.

"I mentioned before a cousin of my fathers , Weibush eibush of St Louis. e He become interested in land here and in 1884 bought a tract, and it is this tract that the town of Riesel was located. He sent his son Henry down to take charge but to this city boy the country was too wild and he woud would not stay. A daughter of my uncle still owns from 30 to 40 lots in the town and I look after them.

"I married Aline heiss Theiss in 1891 at the age of 18 years. We have three children, Walter who lives in ston Houston and is manager of the Gulf Brewing Co. Mrs Carl Toastman Riesel, and Charles of New York, who is doing research work for the Bell labratories. And now if you will pardon me and be patient I will try to tell you a few of my own experiences of the early days , of which I have been giving you the story of the other fellow.

" hile While sitting here only about one and a half miles from the place where my parents settled in 1879 I cannot but marvel at the changes time has brought [?] he The vast prairie on the east side of the railroad from Harrison Switch to Riesel and on to Marlin all gone and in the place of this prairie are the beautiful farms with the valleys dotted with timber. The little city of iesel Riesel lying in the midst of this farming country, with its beautiful

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homes, good streets, good schools and fine churches. 8 In the bottom west of the railroad from Waco to Marlin where we boys had a fine hunting ground for wolves, foxes, coons, opossums and all kinds of the feathered tribe it is also settled with nice homes and turned into farms. Another look backward into memories page I can see the boy that was myself as he trudged the five miles to school. nd And what a school house ! An old building built of scrap lumber with about sixteen or eighteen cracks in the walls which a handle of a hoe could be run thro', and a door which would not shut half the time !

“In the winter the cattle would put up for the night in our school house and the next morning when we came to school the first thing that we boys did was to take a hoe and clean out the room, then the fires were to be built in an old wood stove that we had to coax to get to burn enough to warm by.

“The old blue back speller and McGuffey's Reader with the arithmetic was our study course , reminds me of the song, “Reading an' writin' an' 'rithmetic, taught to the tune of a hickory stick”, which was truly a reality for besides the hickory stick we also had the tune of the tobacco and snuff dipping by the teacher.

“And there was the country dances ! They have dissapeared like the ranchs that is, the cow-boy dances. it was not an uncommon sight to see the cowboys dancing with a pistol in one pocket and a bottle of whiskey in the other. A fight before the dance was over was so common that no one paid any attention to them unless there hapened happened to be blood spilled “Oh a man there live lived , on the western plain, With a ton of fight and an ounce of brain; 9 “Who herds the cows and robs the train; And cowboy is his name. He shoots out lights in the dancing halls; He gets shot up in a drunken brawl. Some coroners jury then ends it all, and thats the last of this kidn of cowboy. “ So the old cowboy ditty goes. This was the way some of them used to celebrate when they were paid off, but that too , has been a thing of the past for a long, long time.

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"I remember several instances that to me were thrilling. One was when a minister from up North came and stayed in our home. I had to go on horseback and show him the country and where the people lived. We passed through many pastures and had to go thro' wire gaps, I had my horse trained so that I could open them without getting off him, and then I also had him trained so that when I was riding in a run I could stoop over and pick up things from the ground. Whn When we had our horses broke it was great sport to see who could break the most horses rope the cattle and ride the worst bucking bronco. When this minister returned to his home he wrote an article in his home town paper and used me for an illustration of how the Texas boys could ride. So this was my first thrill over having my name in the paper. Was I proud? Well I should say so.

"Then when I was fifteen years old some of the cattlemen and cowboys took me with them to Chicago to the cattlemens convention. When our train was out of Texas some negroes crowded into our coach. (We have the Jim Crow las in Texas). So when the cowboys saw they were in for a ride with the black's they began to make business pick up and when they were thro' there was not a negro left in the coach. 10 "Until I was sixteen years old I punched cattle about three months every spring and helped with the round-ups, branding the calves & dogies (which in the song' of the dogies means when a little calf is left an orphan.) When we had the round-ups the cowboys would ride around the herd at night and sing the cowboy songs, sometimes just croon them to keep the herd quiet. The thoughts of the beautiful moonlight nights, the big herds and the cowboys, the cool fresh air as the morning dawned gives me a homesick longing for the days of the range that nothing can fill the place.

"After the Houston and Texas Central railroad was built thro' to Waco, we often drove our cattle down to Marlin to load on the train to ship to Houston. I remember once when we went into a saloon and the boys took their drink, as I was so young they gave me soda water. (I was considered entirely too youn young to be allowed a drink of whiskey) Soon

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some cowboys from another ranch came in and had their drinks and one of them saw me and insisted that I have a drink of whiskey with him.

“When I refused he took out his gun and began shooting at my feet and had me to dance to keep out of the way of the bullets. To this I did my best and pretty soon my crowd took it up and before they decided the question whether I was to dance or not to dance there was a free for all fight , with no injury excepting a few swollen eyes and bumps from each others fists. After they had settled this to their satisfaction they forgot me and called it a day.

“Speaking of cattle I remember the first white faced cattle I ever saw was when Mr Schlimbach came over from Germany, he brought four 11 head of full blood white face / cattle with him. (As well as I remember they wer herefords) two mules, and two milk cows also three or four different kind's of full blood registered dogs from a little German [?] to a large Dane.

“But the king of the Texas herds in those days were the Longhorns. He is a distinctive type dating back to the high plains of Central Spain and of Northern Africa. As the pioneers pushed back the wilderness there were thousands of these Longhorns that roamed the plains. The cow-punchers still [?] their songs thro' the ranch country, but the day of the Longhorn is ended.

“When Southwest Texas and Northern Mexico were [?] about 19 1928 for the pure bred Longhorns , in an effort of the United States Government to preserve the breed, after searching the thickets and mesquite on both side of the Rio Grande they found only thirty head that were true to type. Then Congress made an appropriation of \$3.000 to pay for work of locating and purchasing the herd. They were sent to Wichita Park near Lawton Oklahoma. There in the valleys with its fine grass and climate the herd increased and in 1931 there were 75 in the herd.

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“In appreciation of the fact that his sun has set for the Longhorn , the horns are to be mounted and placed in the South's great Museums as representative of the reign of the Longhorn. There should be a statue of the Texas owboy Cowboy saluting this the “ King of the Texas ange range . “